

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)**

Policy Focus Group

**Minutes
October 4, 2006**

Attending:

RMAC:

Representing

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association
Mike Connor	Public Member
Clancy Dutra	California Farm Bureau Federation
Henry Giacomini	California Farm Bureau Federation
Scott Carnegie	California Forestry Association
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association
Chuck Pritchard	California Assoc. of Resource Conservation Districts
Jeff Stephens	CDF / RMAC Executive Secretary

Members of the Public:

Dave Titus	CDF
Jerry Reiox	NRCS

Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:

Ken Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. Introductions of all present were made.

Item 3, Discussion of the concept paper, “*Integrating Natural Resource Management in California with Resource Conservation Investments.*”

Ken Zimmerman stated that the issue before this Focus Group has been the concept paper on integrating natural resource management with conservation investments. Dave Titus has been asked to attend this session and provide background on how bonds develop and the process of establishing funding through the bond process.

Mr. Titus began by stating that prior to 2000 bonds were rarely used as a funding mechanism. More recently they have become quite common. There are two methods for establishing bond funds:

1. Public process: On your own write a bond proposal and submit it to the Legislative Council and the Attorney General for title and summary; submit the proper number of signatures which Mr. Titus believes is about 373, 000; and place the bond on the ballot; the Department of Finance would provide a summary of fiscal impacts which would also appear on the ballot.

2. The second method: Legislative method. The Legislative Council formats the bond as piece of legislation (bill) that can be argued/amended as it moves through the legislature. A 2/3 majority is required by both houses of the legislature for the bond to be placed on the ballot. It can be passed with a majority but it would be delayed until the following January.

Bonds today are shopped. That is various groups and individuals are approached seeking support of passage of the bond. It creates strange partnerships that would not normally occur. Most of the resource management type bonds are going through many of the well known environmental groups. Therefore to influence the content of the bond requires access to the supporting groups that have influence over content.

Within the legislature the legislator carrying the bond is critical to impacting its content. CDF does this routinely on legislation that impacts issues important to CDF. It is also possible for bonds to be moving via both methods simultaneously.

Ken Zimmerman stated that his understanding is that if expenditure for capital investment is specifically identified in the bond then the money can be used for this purpose. Otherwise it would be impossible to use bond funding for such things as maintenance. Is this true? Dave Titus responded that he did not know but would attempt to find out.

Dave Titus asked which of the two methods mentioned would RMAC be seeking to influence. Ken Zimmerman stated that RMAC is advisory in nature. If the RMAC were to influence language it would be in the public arena versus in the legislature.

Ken Zimmerman asked what happens after the bond is passed? Is there legislative process that follows that for repayment? Dave Titus responded that every bond fund is paid off first out of general fund. He confirmed through discussion initiated by Mel Thompson that the funds do not become available until after the bond passes. Mel Thompson followed up with the observation that government entities that he interfaces with dealing with water issues are operating as if passage of the bond is a forgone conclusion. Jeff Stephens responded that it could be that the agencies are preparing the infrastructure in anticipation of the bonds passing.

Jeff Stephens confirmed with Dave Titus that unused bond funds would revert back to the general fund.

Dave Titus stated that the bond language dictates how much funding is available and for what purposes. Ken Zimmerman and Mel Thompson asked for clarification on the definition of various terms such as unfunded, unencumbered, un-appropriated, etc. Dave Titus stated that he would research the terminology and respond back to RMAC.

Questions were raised on how the prop 40 bond funding functions with CDF. Mr. Stephens responded stating that CDF gained access to prop 40 through a budget change proposal that resulted in prop 40 funds appearing in the CDF budget as a line item. CDF could then access those funds for the intended use.

Ken Zimmerman thanked Dave Titus for making the time for RMAC. Mr. Titus stated that he would pursue answers to questions raised during the session.

Ken Zimmerman returned the discussion to the letter that was under construction by Scott Carnegie and Mel Thompson. Comments by Mel Thompson and Scott Carnegie made it clear that they wish to hear further clarification of the assignment tasked to them. Scott Carnegie stated that he was not sure if he was preparing an introduction to the paper or a letter of invitation for others to become involved.

Jerry Reieux paraphrased for his own understanding what RMAC's objectives were with the review of bond fund acquisitions; that property is being publicly acquired; however, management is not being accomplished because there is no funding to write management plans, pay for management infrastructure, or hire individuals to carry out management. Ken Zimmerman and others with RMAC confirmed Jerry Reieux's understanding to be correct.

Ken Zimmerman re-emphasized his objective which is to get a dialogue started with a coalition of people analogous to the group that has been brought together by the California Rangeland Resolution, and to ask for their assistance. Clancy Dutra stated his belief that most people assume these properties are being managed, and that he believes there is a real hurdle to get over in just informing people that these properties exist, and that management is not occurring. He further stated that this hurdle exists even with the people that RMAC is contemplating for invitation to the discussion.

Mel Thompson referred to the Santa Cruz paper (obstacles to land management) and the fact that substantial work has been done by the authors. He further recommended that RMAC obtain the final version of the paper and that RMAC consult with the authors. Henry Giacomini asked what the scope of the paper was. Mel Thompson responded stating that it looks at land acquisition statewide across multiple agencies. He then quoted the following passage from the U.C. Santa Cruz paper as being of particular relevance to the RMAC discussion; "bond monies that are used for acquisition can not be used for operation and maintenance." The paper further states that land stewardship is not being addressed.

Ken Zimmerman referred to a list of bullet points generated by a conversation between him and Jeff Stephens. One of the points presented is that RMAC needs clear direction of what the objective is for pursuing the issue of public acquisition. He then asked if this remains as a problem for some of the committee members. Some responded in the affirmative. He then stated his desire to educate the public of the problem in hopes that the public would want publicly acquired lands managed responsibly. He posed the question, "Can we agree that the purpose is for public awareness and education?" Mel Thompson stated that if the RMAC effort is narrowed down to an educational process he could see how the Zimmerman paper could be re-written for that purpose. Scott Carnegie stated that we must also be able to show why management is needed. Rather than obtaining a response further discussion led to reasons as to why these properties were being acquired; wildlife preserves; open space; etc.

Chuck Pritchard stated that even if we were successful in establishing funds for management of publicly acquired lands, there exists a serious shortage of people that have the expertise to manage for the specific purposes for which the land was acquired. He cited examples of cases where lands were acquired for a single species which requires knowledge of that species; however, the managers selected were not trained for the species of interest. Therefore, establishing funds to allow for management to occur is one problem; finding competent people to manage for the intended use is another.

Henry Giacomini noted that the expense for managing these properties is likely underestimated, and that a preferred method for dealing with management would be to involve the private sector, allow them to generate revenue; a portion of which could be invested back into the property for management.

Henry Giacomini's comments lead to a discussion of alternatives of how to manage public lands. Discussion involving Chuck Pritchard, Henry Giacomini, Mel Thompson, and Ken Zimmerman explored the various options for managing public lands that included 100% funded through public funds via legislation, to private management while maintaining the original purpose for the public acquisition.

Scott Carnegie brought the discussion back to the RMAC proposed objectives of public education and awareness regarding public land acquisition and the need for management. Mike Connor noted that our objective should be more than just informing and awareness. It should include recommendations for solving the problem of management. Mel Thompson noted that funding is an obstacle per the Santa Cruz paper; however, that is an academic point of view as compared to someone proposing a program of management that involves private enterprise such as grazing.

Ken Zimmerman indicated that the letter prepared by Scott Carnegie is very close to what is needed to invite the people RMAC wishes to have contribute to the investigation. Scott Carnegie recommended and Mel Thompson agreed that RMAC should speak with the U.C. Santa Cruz authors first before compiling a list of key individuals that RMAC wishes to work on the project. Chuck Pritchard recommended that any group invited to work/comment on the issues of financing management of public lands should include land managers from the private sector, since they have practical experience. He then recommended several individuals. Jerry Reiox stated that a similar effort was put forth by Andrea Tuttle and a list of key individuals was put together with that effort. If this list can be located individuals could be recruited using the Tuttle list as a reference.

Jeff Stephens asked the Chairman if he may make comment. He reminded RMAC of their statutory authority to consult with and advise the Board, Cal EPA, Secretary of Resources, and Secretary of Food and Agriculture. Any attempts by RMAC to educate and inform regarding the disconnect between the acquisition of public lands and their management should be done with RMAC's statutory authority in mind. Ken Zimmerman countered with his belief that Scott Carnegie had captured the issue with the language contained in the letter of invitation, "The RMAC urges the Resources Agency to take the lead in a facilitated process for the development of a coordinated Natural Resource Management Strategic Plan for public lands."

Mike Connor and Henry Giacomini stated that our process includes going to the Board and asking for endorsement of the actions being proposed.

Discussion continued on how best to proceed; whether to continue with modifications to the Ken Zimmerman paper or to consult with a select group prior to any further action. This included comments by Ken Zimmerman indicating that the paper was the vehicle by which RMAC gained support of the Board to pursue the issue of public land acquisition and land management. Jeff Stephens stated that with further contact and information obtained from persons or groups that understand this problem, RMAC will be in a better position to decide the best course; whether to continue with the development of a detailed paper or to assist others with achieving greater recognition of the problem. Ken Zimmerman stated

approaching other agencies that RMAC is advisory may result in an entirely new assignment different from the current task, depending on the priorities of that agency.

Mel Thompson noted that the Santa Cruz paper did not make reference in the table of contents to recouping revenue by private means such as grazing animals or harvesting vegetation. This is an example of where the paper has room for additional work. Ken Zimmerman noted that he did not recall recommendations of how to fix the problem, and this may be an opportunity to work cooperatively with the Santa Cruz authors.

Clancy Dutra noted that this is an election year, and there is the possibility that changing administrations or even the same administration would elect to replace some agency heads. This could result in new points of contact for RMAC.

Henry Giacomini came back to the subject to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and stated he felt they are aware of the problem. As an example he cited an adjacent property that was acquired by DFG and continues to be grazed in spite of the purchase. There is another piece of property soon to be purchased and DFG is very eager to talk about grazing (managing) the property. He viewed this as encouraging at least for Shasta County: his point being that solutions are being sought and that some awareness of the problem within agencies does exist.

Ken Zimmerman asked RMAC for their opinion as to whether the letter prepared by Scott Carnegie could serve the purpose of a letter of invitation to the WCB and the Santa Cruz authors. Scott Carnegie and Mel Thompson stated that it could serve this purpose with a few modifications. Scott Carnegie agreed to modify the letter and submit to Jeff Stephens for distribution to RMAC.

RMAC members debated who the most appropriate person would be to invite from the WCB. The RMAC decided that the current Executive Officer would be an appropriate person to invite.

Ken Zimmerman proposed that RMAC members propose a list of talking points that could be used to stimulate discussion and questions for the invited persons from the WCB and U.C. Santa Cruz. This closed discussion on agenda item 3.

Item 4, New and Unfinished Business:

Ken Zimmerman asked RMAC to consider new dates for the November 2006 meeting. December 5 and 6 were recommended for consideration at the Full RMAC meeting the next day.

Item 12, Public Comment:

None

Adjourn

Action Items:

Motions: none

Tasks:

Dave Titus (CDF) will provide an explanation of the various terminologies used within bond funds such as “appropriated, encumbered, expended,” etc.

Scott Carnegie will prepare the letter to UC Santa Cruz and the Wildlife Conservation Board asking for their attendance at the December RMAC meeting.

All RMAC members are asked to prepare a list of talking points in preparation for the discussion with the UC Santa Cruz authors of the paper Obstacles to Land Stewardship in California, and the Executive Officer for the wildlife Conservation Board in December. Submit input to Jeff Stephens.